brought irresistible pressure upon the individual or the government. At times even the throne has had to bow to it.

Clearly, therefore, the individual who attempts to stand alone finds his path thorny. Chinese society has been and is an interplay of groups, some of them united by blood, some by economic ties, and some by political, professional, or religious interests. By the custom of "sworn brotherhood" men not otherwise bound to each other pledge reciprocal fidelity, perhaps professing to hark back for a precedent to the famous "Peach Garden Oath" taken during the Three Kingdoms by Lui Pei, Chang Fei, and Kuan Yii. It is believed that it was such a relationship which in 1898 led Yuan Shih-k'ai to reveal to Jung Lu Kuang Hsu's plan of action and so precipitated the fateful *coup d'etat* of September of that year.

All these many kinds of associations make Chinese society extraordinarily complex. They are one reason why the uninitiated foreigner finds particular problems and situations in politics and business so difficult to understand. Even an intelligent Chinese frequently fails to know all the elements involved.

It is also apparent that such a society develops marked skill in effecting compromises and adjustments among its many groups and that secret parleys and intrigues flourish. Not only must the individual, if he is to succeed and often if he is even to survive, associate himself with as strong a group or groups as possible, but he must frequently be an adept at playing off one against another and at diplomacy, perhaps underhanded and tortuous. This may help to account for that foreign policy for which the Chinese Government has been noted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—of seeking to save itself by pitting powers

against each other and entering into secret treaties. It is part of the struggle for survival in which the Chinese have been drilled from infancy. In such a society, moreover, the forthright person has often been at a disadvantage and he who would stand against convention and the group may be given short shrift.

Still another side of the picture must not be forgotten. Many, both foreigners and Chinese, regard the Chinese as rather unsuccessful at cooperation. They point out that much of existing concerted action is under the pressure of strong necessity, that in such matters as schools, bridges, and roads cooperation is either